

CONFIDENTIAL

19 October 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: September 1966 Hoc Tap Editorial "Let Us Step Up Theory-Formulating Task of the Party"

1. This editorial is significant in several respects, doubly so because Hoc Tap is the Lao Dong party's official theoretical journal and anything appearing therein can be read as an authoritative party statement. First, the editorial includes the most blatant official admission I have ever seen of the fact that for 36 years the Vietnamese Communist party has struggled to acquire political control of Vietnam and although its tactics have often been adjusted to circumstances, these tactical shifts have all been aimed at an unswerving strategic objective. The editorial makes quite explicit that from its inception the party intended, in accordance with sound Leninist doctrine, to take control of the "bourgeois democratic revolution" in order to create a socialist (i.e., Communist) state.
2. The editorial also includes the closest thing I have seen to an explicit Communist admission that the National Liberation Front is their creature and one of their tactical devices. (The key sentences bearing on the above points are quoted in full in this memorandum's annex.) The editorial also acknowledges that the struggle in Vietnam is a single struggle, directed by the party, intended to "develop socialism in the north, liberate the south, and advance toward reunifying the Fatherland". This phraseology is not new but acquires additional meaning in light of the parallel comments noted above.

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3. The editorial is also interesting because it is easily read (indeed, it is hard not to read) as anti-Chinese. Marx is quoted, but never Mao. Neither China nor any Chinese leader is explicitly mentioned. The editorial does say that in light of the Vietnamese party's "responsibility to our working class ... and ... its responsibility to the international Communist and workers movement", it has the duty "to participate actively in the struggle to defend the lucidity of Marxism-Leninism against revisionism, which is the principal danger". In the same sentence, however, the editorial goes on to add immediately that the party must also struggle against "dogmatism and sectarianism", and adds that it must work to restore and strengthen the "unity and unanimity of the international Communist movement and of the socialist camp, on the basis of Marxist-Leninist and proletarian internationalism". These words are hard to read as is anything that slaps the Chinese.

4. The main object of the editorial is to vindicate the "creativity" of the Vietnamese party. This too is a doctrine the Chinese would not find congenial under present circumstances. Furthermore, the article singles out "erroneous" comrades who apparently doubt the party's creativity and are too slavishly prone to follow foreign examples. We cannot be sure just who these erring brethren may be, but in the context of the whole piece I rather suspect Truong Chinh and his pro-Chinese followers are the people referred to.

5. There is nothing in the editorial to give us aid and comfort by suggesting a softer Vietnamese line. The admission of the party's role in the current struggle in the south, however, does vindicate part of the appreciation on which present U.S. policy is based.

George A. Carver, Jr.
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Attachment

Orig - DCI w/att

1 - w/att

1 - ER w/att

1 - NVN Attituded w/att

1 - SAVA Chrono

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